DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 405 154 RC 020 938

AUTHOR	Fuller, Wayne E.
TITLE	The Old Country School: The Story of Rural Education in the Middle West.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-226-26882-9
PUB DATE	82
NOTE	306p.
AVAILABLE FROM	University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL 60637 (out-of-print; available only via interlibrary loan).
PUB TYPE	Historical Materials (060) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Books (010)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Boards of Education; Centralization; *Educational Change; Educational Development; *Educational History; Elementary Secondary Education; *Free Education; Higher Education; One Teacher Schools; Politics of Education; *Rural Education; *Rural Farm Residents; *Rural Schools; School Community Relationship; School District Autonomy; Small Schools; Superintendents; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS	Small School Districts; *United States (Midwest)

ABSTRACT

This book examines the educational history of the Midwest during the late 19th and 20th centuries. Specifically, the book overviews the development of rural education in Wisconsin, Ohio, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Minnesota. Data sources include the reports of state superintendents; Annual Reports of the United States Commissioner of Education; and diaries, journals, and memoirs preserved by state historical societies and state libraries. The book describes the origins and operation of one-room schools, the rise of professional educators, and the long-standing conflict between educators and farmers over the adequacy of schools. Factors are identified that contributed to the demise of small independent school districts controlled by farmers and the creation of township districts--the beginning of the trend toward centralization of rural schools. The book also addresses the role of county superintendents and local boards of education, the influence of politics on educational development, the establishment of normal schools for educating teachers, the inequalities between urban and rural schools, and the struggles between farmers and professional educators about appropriate solutions to rural schooling problems. The continuing loss of rural population and declining school enrollment led farmers to realize they could no longer withstand the demands for change, and through the 1950s, rural one-teacher schools were consolidated into larger, centralized schools. This book concludes that despite their supposed deficiencies, midwestern one-teacher schools successfully educated thousands of children and virtually eliminated illiteracy. Includes photographs, chapter notes, and an index. (LP)